POEMS FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

FROM

WILL CARLETON

[See p. 66

WATCHING THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

POEMS FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

FROM

WILL CARLETON

ILLUSTRATED

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MCMVI

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book presents to American children the first collection which has been made of those verses of Will Carleton that are peculiarly adapted to younger readers. The wide popularity of his poems with all ages, young and old, and with all classes, has frequently brought to him and his publishers, among other suggestions, a plea for a volume of verse designed particularly for boys and girls. For this there are evident reasons. These poems touch the heart and reach universal sympathies. They are typically American, picturing the joys of out-door life and sport, commemorating historic anniversaries which are of so much importance in our school life, sketching scenes from American history, suggesting lessons in pluck and heroism, affording serious memorial verse for readings and recitations and delightfully humorous tales in rhyme. This is verse which children will understand and like. The patriotic motive which rings true in these poems, and the tributes to the great figures of American history, embody the kind of influence that parents and teachers seek for American boys and girls.

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THE MARCH OF THE CHILDREN

List to the sound of the drumming!
Gayly the children are coming;
Sweet as the smile of a fairy,
Fresh as the blossoms they carry.
Pride of the parents who love them,
Pure as the azure above them,
Free as the winds that caress them,
Bright as the sunbeams that bless them.

List to the voice-echoes ringing!
Sweeter than birds they are singing;
Thoughts that to virtue invite them,
Wed unto airs that delight them.
Truths that their future will cherish,
Soul-planted, never to perish!
Only to senses completer,
Heaven's choicest music were sweeter!

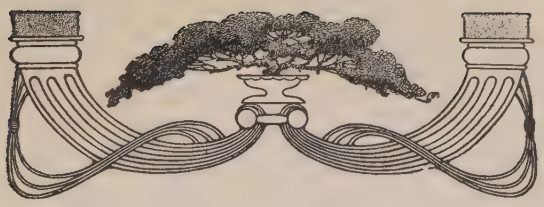
Virtue, unconscious and pretty,
Walks through the streets of the city;

See the gay bannerets flying,
Mottoes and titles undying;
Truths dearly hallowed and olden,
Braided in strands that are golden;
Words for the spirit's desiring,
Sentences sweetly inspiring!

When, in a voice of caressing,
Christ gave the children His blessing,
'Twas not for one generation—
But for each epoch and nation.
So through the present it lingers,
Shed from His bountiful fingers;
So unto these it is given—
Types of the angels in heaven.

PART I

POEMS FOR YOUNG AMERICANS



POEMS FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

COASTING DOWN THE HILL

There's a glory in the speeding of a horse the nerves can feel,
Or the swift and silent magic of a pedal-hastened wheel,
Or the rushing and the foaming that the flying yachts possess,
Or in clinging to the pilot of a limited express;
But there's naught to stir the senses, and there's nothing ever will,
Like the starry winter evenings when we coasted down the hill—
Down the long and slippery hill—
Down the steep and glaring hill—
With the clinging, and the shrieking, and the laughing hoarse and shrill!

Far above the pallid valley hung the moon, so safe and high—
Like a ball of ice it glittered in a frozen sea of sky;

And the trees were dressed in silver, and the bushes
stood aglow,
And a million jewels nestled on the bosom of the
snow.
But the eyes that we were watching, they were
beaming brighter still,
As we packed our load together to go coasting
down the hill—
Down the snowy, icy hill—
Down the long and dizzy hill—
With the shouting, and the calling, and the danger
of a "spill"!

With a mile of road before us like a polished blade
agleam,
On the ready track we started, in a short, delicious
dream;
Through the fences, past the bridges, over "thank-
ye-ma'ams" to spare,
Leaping from them like a panther, in the crisp and
biting air;
Past the still and lonely school-house and the
frost-enfettered mill,
Thinking naught about the stopping — with a
laugh at every ill—
Down the ne'er-forgotten hill—
Down the white and gleaming hill—
Just a streak of human lightning, we went flash-
ing down the hill!

"WITH A MILE OF ROAD BEFORE US LIKE A POLISHED BLADE AGLEAM"

THE BOY IN THE MOW

There glides through the barn's mammoth door
  A sweet-scented hill-top of hay;
An athlete, with strength bubbling o'er,
  Now flings it in forkfuls away.
Another is stowing it back,
  With white pearls of toil on his brow;
And, treading the hay in his track,
  Looms faintly the boy in the mow.

Through crevices often can he
  View, past the old barn-wall of brown,
A river that leads to the sea,
  A railway that drives to the town.
"Oh, when shall my fortune make hay,
  In yon fields of splendor, and how?
'Twill wait for full many a day:
  I'm only a boy in the mow."

A cloud, like a flag from the sky,
  Is splendidly spread and unrolled;

The sun reaches down from on high
To fringe it with silver and gold.
"Oh, when will Heaven's mercy my name
As bright as those colors allow?
But earth has no glory or fame
To waste on a boy in a mow."

A cloud in the west, like a pall,
Creeps upward and hangs in the light;
It carries a gloom over all,
It looks like a part of the night.
With clamor the thunder-bolts swarm,
And trees bend in agony, now;
"'Tis thus, too, that poverty's storm
Hangs over the boy in the mow."

The clouds have flown into a dream,
The birds are discoursing in glee,
The smile of the sun is agleam
On river and hill-top and tree.
Look up to the Heavens, little lad,
And then to your earth-duties bow;
And some day both worlds may be glad.
To honor the boy from the mow!

FIGHT IT OUT!

Does destruction seem to lurk
All about?
Don't believe it! Go to work!
Fight it out!
Danger often turns and flies
From a steady pair of eyes;
Ruin always camps apart
From an undefeated heart.
In the spirit there is much—
Do not doubt—
That the world can never touch:
Fight it out!

Do the portals of your brain
Freedom lack?
Never let them thus remain:
Push them back!
Do not give the efforts o'er,
If they number half a score;
When a hundred of them fail,
Then a thousand might prevail.

Germs beneath a clod must lie
Ere they sprout;
You may blossom, by-and-by:
Fight it out!

Have your foemen come to stay?
Never flinch;
Make them win their little way,
Inch by inch.
Scan them well, and fight them fair,
Give them honest blows to spare;
There are meaner things possessed
Than a first-class second-best.
Time may come when you have turned
To a rout
Every triumph they have earned:
Fight it out!

All the lessons of the time
Teach us fair,
'Tis a blunder and a crime
To despair.
When we suffer, 'tis to bless
Other moments with success;
From our losses, we may trace
Something better in their place.
Everything in earth and sky
Seems to shout,
"Don't give up until you die;
Fight it out!"

"FLASH": THE FIREMAN'S STORY

"Flash" was a white-foot sorrel, an' run on Number Three:
Not much stable manners—an average horse to see;
Notional in his methods—strong in loves an' hates;
Not very much respected, or popular 'mongst his mates.

Dull an' moody an' sleepy, an' "off" on quiet days;
Full o' turbulent, sour looks, an' small sarcastic ways;
Scowled an' bit at his partner, an' banged the stable floor—
With other means intended to designate life a bore.

But when, be't day or night time, he heard the alarm-bell ring,
He'd rush for his place in the harness with a regular tiger spring;
An' watch, with nervous shivers, the clasp of buckle an' band,
Until 'twas plainly evident he'd like to lend a hand.

An' when the word was given, away he would rush an' tear,
As if a thousand witches was rumplin' up his hair,
An' craze the other horses with his magnetic charm,
Till every hoof-beat sounded a regular fire-alarm!

Never a horse a jockey would notice an' admire
Like Flash in front of his engine a-runnin' to a fire;
Never a horse so lazy, so dawdlin', an' so slack,
As Flash upon his return trip, a-drawin' the engine back.

Now, when the different horses gets tender-footed an' old,
They're no use in our business; so Flash was finally sold
To quite a respectable milkman, who found it not so fine
A-bossin' one o' God's creatures outside its natural line.

Seems as if I could see Flash a-mopin' along here now,
Feelin' that he was simply assistant to a cow;
But sometimes he'd imagine he heard the alarm-bell's din,
An' jump an' rear for a season before they could hold him in;

An' once, in spite o' his master, he strolled in
'mongst us chaps,
To talk with the other horses, of former fires, per-
haps;
Whereat the milkman kicked him; whereat, us
boys to please,
He begged that horse's pardon upon his bended
knees.

But one day, for a big fire as we was makin' a
dash,
Both o' the horses we had on somewhat resemblin'
Flash,
Yellin' an' ringin' an' rushin', with excellent voice
an' heart,
We passed the poor old fellow, a-tuggin' away at
his cart.

If ever I see an' old hoss grow upward into a new—
If ever I see a milkman whose traps behind him
flew,
'Twas that old hoss, a-rearin' an' racin' down the
track,
An' that respectable milkman a-tryin' to hold him
back.

Away he rushed like a cyclone for the head o'
"Number Three,"
Gained the lead, an' kept it, an' steered his journey
free;

Dodgin' wagons an' horses, an' still on the keenest
"silk,"
An' furnishin' all that neighborhood with good, re-
spectable milk.

Crowd a-yellin' an' runnin', an' vainly hollerin'
"Whoa!"
Milkman bracin' an' sawin', with never a bit o'
show;
Firemen laughin' an' chucklin', an' shoutin' "Good!
go in!"
Hoss a-gettin' down to it, an' sweepin' along like
sin.

Finally came where the fire was—halted with a
"thud";
Sent the respectable milkman heels over head in
mud;
Watched till he see the engines properly workin'
there,
After which he relinquished all interest in the
affair.

Moped an' wilted an' dawdled, "faded away" once
more,
Took up his old occupation — considerin' life a
bore;
Laid down in his harness, an'—sorry I am to say—
The milkman he had drawn there took his dead
body away.

That's the whole o' my story: I've seen, more'n once or twice,
That poor dead animals' actions is full o' human advice;
An' if you ask what Flash taught, I'll simply answer, then,
That poor old horse was a symbol of some intelligent men.

THE SERPENT OF THE STILL

The tempter, as God's legends tell—
  Allowed on earth to roam—
Crushed that which Woman loves so well,
  Her sweet and sacred home.
From Eden, lost through his black art,
  She wandered out forlorn;
She cursed him in her gentle heart
  With meek but deadly scorn.
And since, in varied guise of sin,
  He works his hateful will,
And reappears to-day within
  The serpent of the still.

He comes not now in subtle mood—
  With smiles, as long ago—
Enticing her by honeyed food,
  And mysteries she may know;
He makes insulting, swift advance
  Into her bright home-nest,
Admitted and embraced, perchance,
  By those she loves the best.

"HE TWINES ABOUT HER TREMBLING LIFE"

He brings the world where he must dwell,
Her days and nights to fill,
Transmuting Paradise to Hell—
This serpent of the still!

He twines about her trembling life,
And soils it with his slime;
He fills the hours with foolish strife,
He sows the seeds of crime.
And Poverty and fierce Disease,
And Hunger and Disgrace,
And Death by death-empanged degrees,
Are in his cold embrace;
To grieve, to hurt, to rend, to smite,
To ruin and to kill,
Are leaden links of his delight—
The serpent of the still!

Rouse, woman, in your quiet power,
Your heart's man-withering frown,
Your hand that rules the festal hour,
And crush the monster down!
You shape the human form and soul,
You mark the infant's way,
Youth's fancy you can oft control,
Man's actions you can sway:
Bend every blessing of your life
To fight its deadliest ill!
Strike—daughter, maiden, widow, wife—
This serpent of the still!

ARBUTUS

Under the snow, under the snow,
The leaves of the trailing arbutus grow;
Toiling, the earth that loves them nigh,
But hoping to some day see the sky.

Under the snow, under the snow,
The flowers of the trailing arbutus grow;
E'en in the dark their duty done,
But hoping to some day kiss the sun.

WESTERLAND

SONG—WESTERLAND

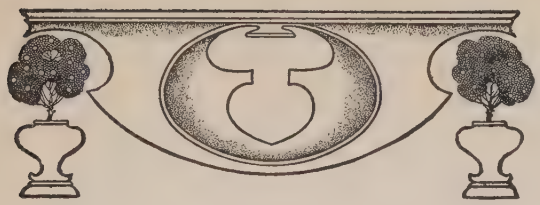
Between the oceans deep and wide,
Westerland, O Westerland,
Are many nations side by side,
Westerland, O Westerland!
The waves that greet thy rocky shore,
And tell thy triumphs o'er and o'er,
Say thou shalt live forevermore,
Westerland, O Westerland!

From many mountains, broad and high,
Westerland, O Westerland,
Thy face is lifted towards the sky,
Westerland, O Westerland!
The storms that leap from hill to hill,
The lightning-bolts that dart and thrill,
But make thy people stronger still,
Westerland, O Westerland!

From prairies rich and golden mines,
Westerland, O Westerland,
Thy wealth in constant splendor shines,
Westerland, O Westerland!

The wealth that God has given to thee,
That thou a power for good might be,
And teach the nations to be free,
Westerland, O Westerland!

May all thy ways be just and pure,
Westerland, O Westerland!
That thou through ages mayest endure,
Westerland, O Westerland!
Till, emblem of the free and brave,
O'er Tyranny's dishonored grave,
Thy flag around the world shall wave,
Westerland O Westerland!



THE LABORING MEN

Who are the laboring men?
We are the laboring men:
We, the muscle of tribes and lands,
With sun-trod faces and horn-gloved hands;
With well-patched garments, stained and coarse—
With untrained voices, heavy and hoarse;
Who brave the death of the noontide heats—
Who mow the meadows and pave the streets;
Who push the plough by the smooth-faced sod,
Or climb the crags with a well-filled hod.
Yes—we are the laboring men—
The genuine laboring men!
And each, somewhere in the stormy sky,
Has a sweet love-star, be it low or high;
For pride have we to do and dare,
And heart have we—to cherish and care;
And power have we: for lose our brawn,
And where were your flourishing cities gone?

Or bind our hands or fetter our feet,
And what would the gaunt world find to eat?
Ay, where were your gentry then?
For we are the laboring men!

Who are the laboring men?
We are the laboring men:
We who stand in the ranks of trade,
And count the tallies that toil has made;
Who guard the coffers of wealth untold,
And ford the streams of glistening gold;
Who send the train in its breathless trips,
And rear the buildings, and sail the ships;
And though our coats be a trifle fine,
And though our diamonds flash and shine,
Yet we are the laboring men—
The genuine laboring men!
We bolt the gates of the angry seas;
We keep the nation's granary keys;
The routes of trade we have built and planned
Are veins of life to a hungry land.
And power have we in our peaceful strife:
For a nation's trade is a nation's life;
And take the sails of our commerce in,
Where were your "artisans' pails of tin"?
Ay, where were your "laborers" then?
For we are the laboring men!

Who are the laboring men?
We are the laboring men:

"WITH SUN TROD FACES AND HORN-GLOVED HANDS"

We of the iron and water way,
Whom fire and steam, and tide obey;
Who stab the sea with a prow of oak—
Who blot the sky with a cloud of smoke;
Who bend the breezes unto our wills,
And feed the looms and hurry the mills;
Who oft have the lives of a thousand known,
In the hissing valves that held our own!
Yes, we are the laboring men—
The genuine laboring men!
And though a coat may a button lack,
And though a face be sooty and black,
And though the words be heavy of flow,
And new-called thoughts come tardy and slow,
And though rough words in a speech may blend,
A heart's a heart, and a friend's a friend!
And power have we: but for our skill,
The wave would drown, and the sea would kill;
And where were your gentry then?
Ay, we are the laboring men!

Who are the laboring men?
We are the laboring men:
We of the mental toil and strain,
Who stall the body and lash the brain;
Who wield our pen when the world's asleep,
And plead with mortals to laugh or weep;
Who bind the wound and plead the cause,
Who preach the sermons and make the laws;

Who man the stage for the listening throng,
And fight the devils of Shame and Wrong.
Yes, we are the laboring men—
The genuine laboring men!
And though our hands be small and white,
And though our flesh be tender and light,
And though our muscle be soft and low,
Our red-blood sluices are swift of flow!
We've power to kindle Passion's fire
With the flame of rage and fell desire;
Or quell, with soothing words and arts,
To throbs of grief, the leaping hearts.
And who shall question, then,
That we are the laboring men?

Who are NOT the laboring men?
They're not the laboring men:
They who creep in dens and lanes,
To rob their betters of honest gains;
The rich that stoop to devour the poor;
The tramps that beg from door to door;
The rogues who love a darkened sky,
And steal and rob, and cheat and lie;
The loafing wights and senseless bloats
Who drain their pockets to wet their throats!
They're not the laboring men—
The genuine laboring men!
And all true hearts that the price would give
For honest joy and a right to live,

And every soul to truth alive,
Willing to thrive and let others thrive,
Should rise with a true and steady hand,
And mark these foes with a villain-brand;
And shame them into the ranks of toil,
Or crush them under their kindred soil,
Away from the laboring men—
The genuine laboring men!

UP THE LINE

Through blinding storm and clouds of night
We swiftly pushed our restless flight;
With thundering hoof and warning neigh,
We urged our steed upon his way,
Up the line.

Afar the lofty head-light gleamed;
Afar the whistle shrieked and screamed;
And glistening bright, and rising high,
Our flakes of fire bestrewed the sky,
Up the line.

Adown the long, complaining track,
Our wheels a message hurried back;
And quivering through the rails ahead,
Went news of our resistless tread,
Up the line.

The trees gave back our din and shout,
And flung their shadow-arms about;

And shivering in their coats of gray,
They heard us roaring far away,
Up the line.

The wailing storm came on apace,
And dashed its tears into our face;
But steadily still we pierced it through,
And cut the sweeping wind in two,
Up the line.

A rattling rush across the ridge,
A thunder-peal beneath the bridge;
And valley and hill and sober plain
Re-echoed our triumphant strain,
Up the line.

And when the eastern streaks of gray
Bespoke the dawn of coming day,
We halted our steed, his journey o'er,
And urged his giant form no more,
Up the line.

THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED REBEL

A boy drove into the city, his wagon loaded down
With food to feed the people of the British-governed town;
And the little black-eyed rebel, so innocent and sly,
Was watching for his coming from the corner of her eye.

His face looked broad and honest, his hands were brown and tough,
The clothes he wore upon him were homespun, coarse and rough;
But one there was who watched him, who long time lingered nigh,
And cast at him sweet glances from the corner of her eye.

He drove up to the market, he waited in the line;
His apples and potatoes were fresh and fair and fine;
But long and long he waited, and no one came to buy
Save the black-eyed rebel, watching from the corner of her eye.

"Now who will buy my apples?" he shouted, long and loud;
And "Who wants my potatoes?" he repeated to the crowd;
But from all the people round him came no word of a reply,
Save the black-eyed rebel, answering from the corner of her eye.

For she knew that 'neath the lining of the coat he wore that day
Were long letters from the husbands and the fathers far away,
Who were fighting for the freedom that they meant to gain or die,
And a tear like silver glistened in the corner of her eye.

But the treasures—how to get them? crept the question through her mind,
Since keen enemies were watching for what prizes they might find;
And she paused awhile and pondered, with a pretty little sigh,
Then resolve crept through her features and a shrewdness fired her eye.

So she resolutely walked up to the wagon old and red;
"May I have a dozen apples for a kiss?" she sweetly said:

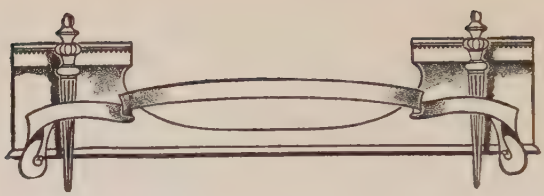
And the brown face flushed to scarlet; for the boy was somewhat shy,
And he saw her laughing at him from the corner of her eye.

"You may have them all for nothing, and more, if you want," quoth he.
"I will have them, my good fellow, but can pay for them," said she;
And she clambered on the wagon, minding not who all were by,
With a laugh of reckless romping in the corner of her eye.

Clinging round his brawny neck, she clasped her fingers white and small,
And then whispered, "Quick! the letters! thrust them underneath my shawl!
Carry back again *this* package, and be sure that you are spry!"
And she sweetly smiled upon him from the corner of her eye.

Loud the motley crowd were laughing at the strange, ungirlish freak,
And the boy was scared and panting, and so dazed he could not speak;
And, "Miss, I have good apples!" a bolder lad did cry;
But she answered, "No, I thank you," from the corner of her eye.

With the news of loved ones absent to the dear
friends they would greet,
Searching them who hungered for them, swift she
glided through the street.
"There is nothing worth the doing that it does not
pay to try,"
Thought the little black-eyed rebel, with a twinkle
in her eye.



THE RIDE OF JENNIE M'NEAL

Paul Revere was a rider bold—
Well has his valorous deed been told;
Sheridan's ride was a glorious one—
Often has it been dwelt upon.
But why should men do all the deeds
On which the love of a patriot feeds?
Hearken to me, while I reveal
The dashing ride of Jennie M'Neal.

On a spot as pretty as might be found
In the dangerous length of the Neutral Ground,
In a cottage, cosey, and all their own,
She and her mother lived alone.
Safe were the two, with their frugal store,
From all of the many who passed their door;
For Jennie's mother was strange to fears,
And Jennie was large for fifteen years;
With vim her eyes were glistening,
Her hair was the hue of a blackbird's wing;
And while the friends who knew her well
The sweetness of her heart could tell,

A gun that hung on the kitchen wall
Looked solemnly quick to heed her call;
And they who were evil-minded knew
Her nerve was strong and her aim was true.
So all kind words and acts did deal
To generous, black-eyed Jennie M'Neal.

One night, when the sun had crept to bed
And rain-clouds lingered overhead,
And sent their surly drops for proof
To drum a tune on the cottage roof,
Close after a knock at the outer door
There entered a dozen dragoons or more.
Their red coats, stained by the muddy road,
That they were British soldiers showed;
The captain his hostess bent to greet,
Saying, "Madam, please give us a bit to eat;
We will pay you well, and, if may be,
This bright-eyed girl for pouring our tea;
Then we must dash ten miles ahead,
To catch a rebel colonel abed.
He is visiting home, as doth appear;
We will make his pleasure cost him dear."
And they fell on the hasty supper with zeal,
Close-watched the while by Jennie M'Neal.

For the gray-haired colonel they hovered near
Had been her true friend, kind and dear;
And oft, in her younger days, had he
Right proudly perched her upon his knee,

And told her stories many a one
Concerning the French war lately done;
And oft together the two friends were,
And many the arts he had taught to her.
She had hunted by his fatherly side,
He had shown her how to fence and ride;
And once had said, "The time may be
Your skill and courage may stand by me."
So sorrow for him she could but feel,
Brave, grateful-hearted Jennie M'Neal.

With never a thought or a moment more,
Bareheaded she slipped from the cottage door,
Ran out where the horses were left to feed,
Unhitched and mounted the captain's steed,
And down the hilly and rock-strewn way
She urged the fiery horse of gray.
Around her slender and cloakless form
Pattered and moaned the ceaseless storm;
Secure and tight, a gloveless hand
Grasped the reins with stern command;
And full and black her long hair streamed
Whenever the ragged lightning gleamed.
So on she rushed for the colonel's weal,
Brave, lioness-hearted Jennie M'Neal.

Hark! from the hills, a moment mute,
Came a clatter of hoofs in hot pursuit;
And a cry from the foremost trooper said,
"Halt! or your blood be on your head!"

She heeded it not, and not in vain
She lashed the horse with the bridle-rein.
So into the night the gray horse strode;
His shoes hewed fire from the rocky road;
And the high-born courage that never dies
Flashed from his rider's coal-black eyes.
The pebbles flew from the fearful race;
The rain-drops grasped at her glowing face.
"On, on, brave beast!" with loud appeal,
Cried eager, resolute Jennie M'Neal.

"Halt!" once more came the voice of dread—
"Halt! or your blood be on your head!"
Then, no one answering to the calls,
Sped after her a volley of balls.
They passed her in her rapid flight—
They screamed to her left, they screamed to her right;
But, rushing still o'er the slippery track,
She sent no token of answer back,
Except a silvery laughter-peal,
Brave, merry-hearted Jennie M'Neal.

So on she rushed, at her own good will,
Through wood and valley, o'er plain and hill;
The gray horse did his duty well,
Till all at once he stumbled and fell—
Himself escaping the nets of harm,
But flinging the girl with a broken arm.
Still undismayed by the numbing pain,
She clung to the horse's bridle-rein,

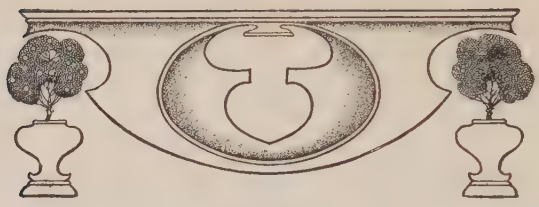
And, gently bidding him to stand,
Petted him with her able hand;
Then sprang again to the saddle-bow,
And shouted, "One more trial now!"
As if ashamed of the heedless fall,
He gathered his strength once more for all,
And, galloping down a hillside-steep,
Gained on the troopers at every leap;
No more the high-bred steed did reel,
But ran his best for Jennie M'Neal.

They were a furlong behind, or more,
When the girl burst through the colonel's door—
Her poor arm, helpless, hanging with pain,
And she all drabbled and drenched with rain,
But her cheeks as red as firebrands are,
And her eyes as bright as a blazing star—
And shouted, "Quick, be quick, I say!
They come! they come! Away! away!"
Then sank on the rude white floor of deal,
Poor, brave, exhausted Jennie M'Neal.

The startled colonel sprang, and pressed
The wife and children to his breast,
And turned away from his fireside bright,
And glided into the stormy night;
Then soon and safely made his way
To where the patriot army lay.
But first he bent, in the dim firelight,
And kissed the forehead broad and white,

And blessed the girl who had ridden so well
To keep him out of a prison cell.

The girl roused up at the martial din,
Just as the troopers came rushing in,
And laughed, e'en in the midst of a moan,
Saying, "Good sirs, your bird has flown.
'Tis I who have scared him from his nest;
So deal with me now as you think best."
But the grand young captain bowed, and said,
"Never you hold a moment's dread.
Of womankind I must crown you queen;
So brave a girl I have never seen.
Wear this gold ring as your valor's due;
And when peace comes I will come for you."
But Jennie's face an arch smile wore
As she said, "There's a lad in Putnam's corps
Who told me the same, long time ago;
You two would never agree, I know.
I promised my love to be true as steel,"
Said good, sure-hearted Jennie M'Neal.



THE PRIZE OF THE *MARGARETTA*

I

Four young men, of a Monday morn,
Heard that the flag of peace was torn;

Heard that "rebels," with sword and gun,
Had fought the British at Lexington,

While they were far from that bloody plain,
Safe on the green-clad shores of Maine.

With eyes that glittered and hearts that burned,
They talked of the glory their friends had earned,

And asked each other, "What can we do,
So our hands may prove that our hearts are true?"

II

Silent the *Margaretta* lay,
Out on the bosom of the bay;

On her masts rich bunting gleamed;
Bravely the flag of England streamed.

The young men gazed at the tempting prize—
They wistfully glanced in each other's eyes.

Said one, "We can lower that cloth of dread,
And hoist the pine-tree flag instead.

"We are only boys to the old and sage;
We have not yet come to manhood's age;

"But we can show them that, when there's need,
Men may follow and boys may lead."

Tightly each other's hands they pressed,
Loudly they cried, "We will do our best;

"The pine-tree flag e're day is passed,
Shall float from the *Margaretta's* mast."

III

They ran to a sloop that lay near-by;
They roused their neighbors with hue and cry;

They doffed their hats, gave three loud cheers,
And called for a crew of volunteers.

Their bold, brave spirit spread far and wide,
And men came running from every side.

Curious armed were the dauntless ones,
With axes, pitchforks, scythes, and guns;

They shouted, "Ere yet this day be passed,
The pine-tree grows from the schooner's mast!"

IV

With sails all set, trim as could be,
The *Margaretta* stood out to sea.

With every man and boy in place,
The gallant Yankee sloop gave chase.

Rippled and foamed the sunlit seas,
Freshened and sang the soft May breeze;

And came from the sloop's low deck, "Hurray!
We're gaining on her! We'll win the day!"

A sound of thunder, echoing wide,
Came from the *Margaretta's* side;

A deadly crash and a loud death-yell,
And one of the brave pursuers fell.

They aimed a gun at the schooner then,
And sent the compliment back again—

He who at the helm of the schooner stood
Covered the deck with his rich life-blood.

V

Each burning to pay a bloody debt,
The crews of the hostile vessels met;

The Western nation, now to be,
Made her first fight upon the sea;

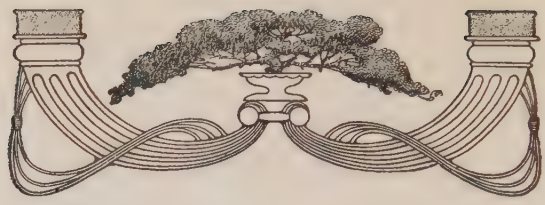
And not till forty men were slain
Did the pine-tree flag a victory gain;

But at last the hearts of the Britons quailed,
And grandly the patriot arm prevailed.

One of the youths the deed to crown
Grasped the colors and pulled them down;

And raised, 'mid cries of wild delight,
The pine-tree flag of blue and white;

And the truth was shown, for the world to read,
That men may follow and boys may lead.



AT THE SUMMIT OF THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

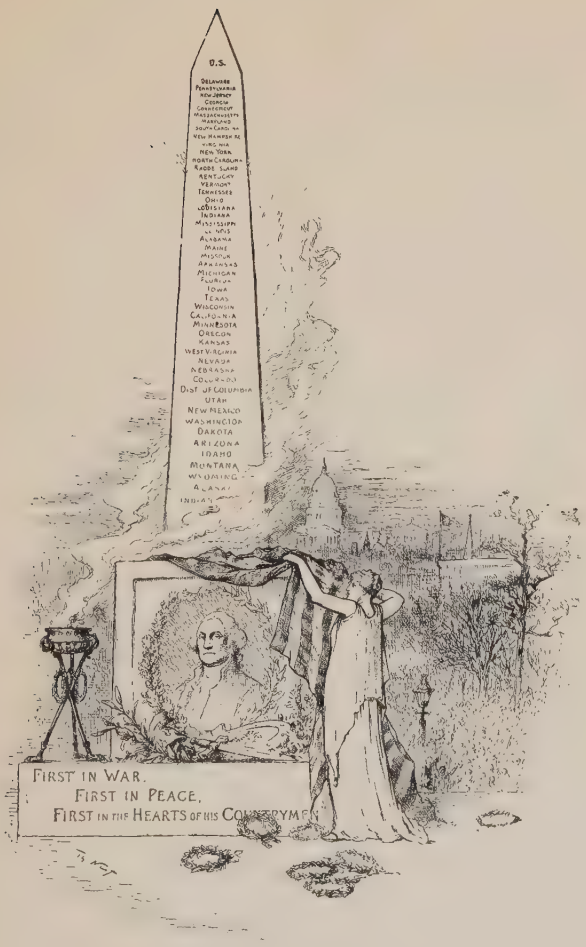
Look North! A white-clad city fills
This valley to its sloping hills;
Here gleams the modest house of white,
The statesman's longed-for, dizzy height.
Beyond, a pledge of love to one
Who in two lands was Freedom's son—
The holder of an endless debt—
Our nation's brother, Lafayette.
But yonder lines of costly homes
And bristling spires and swelling domes,
And far away the spreading farms
Where thrift displays substantial charms,
And hamlets creeping out of sight,
And cities full of wealth and might,
Must own the fatherhood of him
Whose glory Time can never dim.
All who can 'reckon Freedom's worth
Would write across this whole broad earth,

With pen dipped in the golden sun,
The magic name of Washington!
If we can keep the rules he gave
This land he more than fought to save,
Our future fame will glisten forth
Grand as the winter-lighted North!

Look South!—where, in its coat of gray,
The broad Potomac creeps away,
And seeks the blue of distant skies;
But pauses where the great chief lies
Within his humble, hallowed tomb,
Amid Mount Vernon's deathless bloom.
As glides this stream, great corse, past thee,
First to the bay, and then the sea,
So flowed thy life to rural rest,
Ere thou wast Heaven's eternal guest.
Oh strong, high man! whose patriot heart
Climbed from all common greeds apart;
To whom men's selfish ways were small,
As from this tower, serenely tall
(Built that all years thy fame may know),
Men look while creeping there below!
How weak was power to thy clear gaze,
  Builder of nations joined in one,
Kindler of splendors still to blaze,
  Finder of glories just begun!
Live on, great sleeper! as this stone,
Highest from earth that man has known,

So shall be ranked thy solid worth,
Highest of heroes on the earth!
Happy, secure, and cherished name,
Love is the pillar of thy fame;
Thy praise comes from each patriot's mouth,
Warm as the sunbeams of the South!

Look East! The nation's castle walls
Spread out in massive beauty now;
Their lofty dome and pictured halls
In homage to this summit bow.
Oh, well that from these palaced lands
The marble spire obeisance win;
But for the one for whom it stands,
This chieftain-town had never been!
Yon plot, so full of brain and will,
Had stayed a bleak and lonely hill!
If at five thousand dizzy feet
This shaft the whirling clouds could meet,
Until our gaze for miles might be,
To the uncrowned but royal sea,
'Twere not too much of honor then,
To grant our crownless king of men.
You who the nation's laws indite,
Look to this summit's honest white,
Where, throned on walls that must endure,
Pure fame entreats you to be pure;
Until our glory be increased,
Like sunbeams from the dazzling East!



FROM THE MONUMENT

Look West! There lie the hilly fields
  Where brothers fought through days of dread,
  Where mothers brooded o'er their dead,
And soil the thrift of carnage yields;
Where cannon roared and bullets sung,
Till every hillock had a tongue.
O Nation being and to be,
That silent blood speaks loud to thee!
God grant, if e'er our guns again
Must tear the quivering flesh of men,
The leaden hail-storm may be pressed
Against some foul invader's breast—
Against some alien tribe and zone—
And not, as then, to kill our own!
May all the fruitful strifes of peace
The thrilling bonds of love increase;
May yonder orb, in his quick change
From mountain range to mountain range,
From valley to rich valley o'er,
From river shore to river shore,
From wave to wave—may yonder sun
One Nation count, and only one;
Until he dip his fiery crest
Into the ocean of the West!

Look up! The phantom clouds of gray—
Grim ghosts of storm—have passed away;
The veiling of the sky is done,
And downward shines the welcome sun.

He kindles grand and peaceful fires
Upon the city's domes and spires;
He sends his strong magnetic glow
Through yonder moving throngs below.
Thou art, O sky serene and clear,
A symbol of our country here!
What land in all this world of pain,
This earth, where millions toil in vain,
Where famine, pestilence, and strife
Play careless games with human life,
Where Superstition clouds the soul,
And heartless minds sad hearts control—
What country, framed in frost or flowers,
Can see so clear a sky as ours?
Peace throws her mantle, broad and free,
O'er all who peaceable will be;
Plenty her sheltering flag doth wave
O'er those who will but toil and save;
Enlightenment each day shall rise
For all who do not cloud their eyes;
While Liberty from every race
Has made this land a refuge-place.
Let our deep thanks forever fly
Far as the reaches of the sky!

PART II

POEMS OF FESTIVALS AND ANNIVERSARIES

THE QUEEN OF THE DAYS

Now all of the days one day were met,
With sober and anxious mien,
To choose which one they owed the debt
Of crowning it king or queen.

Then New Year shouted, "I always led
The column, and always will;
Give me the crown for my gallant head!"
But all the days were still.

Then Easter spoke—the beautiful child—
And told her gentle will;
They tenderly looked at her and smiled,
But all of them yet were still.

Victoria's natal day was there,
Hedged round with martial skill,
And a glorious reign without compare
But all of the days were still.

July had come with its ordnance-tone
The world of the West to thrill;
And far was the birth of a nation known,
But all of the days were still.

Thanksgiving lifted her thanks on high,
And winsomely ate her fill;
The days looked up to the distant sky,
But all of them yet were still.

Now Christmas came, divinely fair,
Her eyes as a star-beam bright;
The gold of the sun was in her hair,
Her form was a ray of light.

She held in the great world's dazzled gaze
Good gifts for living and dead;
She smiled at all of her sister-days,
But never a word she said.

All knew that the friendly strife was done,
And never a word said they,
But knelt and crowned the beautiful one
As queen for ever and aye.

WHAT SHALL WE GIVE?

What shall we give on a Christmas Day?—
  Money?—they say it is sordid and old,
And hearts that are seeking the upward way
  Are crushed to earth by the weight of gold.
And still does the bank-note's whisper bring
  The palace of pleasure yet more near;
And fair-faced coin, as together they ring,
  Are silver and golden bells of cheer.
So let not sentiment war with thrift,
But mingle them both in a Christmas gift.

Give me a cluster of precious gems—
  Stars of the earth, that were born to rise
Into affection's diadems,
  Into the lover's changeful skies.
Though all the jewels of rock and tide
  Should weave together in one strong ray,
'Twere naught but a burst of glow beside
  The deathless glory of Christmas Day.
Yet costly love is the earth-cloud's rift,
And gems are a goodly Christmas gift.

I see the broideries' colors flow
  Through palace-parlors and humble rooms.
Flit delicate fingers to and fro—
  The ivory shuttles of living looms.
Toil on at your queenly task, O queens!
  And wield your sceptres of form and hue;
The dainty fittings you give life's scenes
  Will last eternity's drama through.
Earth's clouded curtains will fade and shift,
But loving toil is a deathless gift.

What shall we give on a Christmas Day?—
  Whatever a heart to a heart can spare;
Whate'er through the dark can throw a ray,
  Whate'er can fetter the hands of care.
Not all the riches of earth and sea
  Could build their statues one soul above;
And presents, if rightly weighed, must be
  Hung first on the golden scales of love.
While ever to Heaven our thanks uplift,
For God invented the Christmas gift.

THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

THE CHRISTMAS-TIDE

Now comes the Christmas-tide:
Love walks on every side;
Mirth smiles from every eye;
Wreaths greet the passer-by.

Who, full of haughty pride,
Loves not the Christmas-tide?
He who, with av'rice low,
Cares not to joy bestow.

God save the wretch denied
Love for the Christmas-tide!
God tell his hardened heart
Pure joy must joy impart!

Who, close to grief allied,
Grieves 'mid the Christmas-tide?
She who, at Sorrow's call,
Now mourns the loss of all.

God save the dear bereft—
Teach her the mercies left!
Show her that clouds may yet
Lift, ere her sun be set!

THE CHRISTMAS-TREE

Where grows the Christmas-tree—
The green, deep-rooted Christmas-tree?
By what brave toil, in what rich soil,
Can spring the blooming Christmas-tree?
Is it from prairies broad and deep
Where future harvests softly sleep,
And flocks of acres, far and free,
Lie level as a waveless sea?
Or is it where a breeze-skein twines
Between the lofty plumaged pines?
Or where a stealthy languor roves
Among the Southland orange-groves?
Or blooms it best 'mid city homes,
With Wealth's unnumbered spires and domes?
Or is it where, through changeful day,
The mountain shadows creep and play,
And swift a gleaming sun-flood rides
Along the tall cliff's dappled sides?
High grows the Christmas-tree,
The sweet, love-planted Christmas-tree—
Where'er extends the hand of friends;
Wherever heart-caressings be.

What bears the Christmas-tree—
The bright, rich-fruited Christmas-tree?
What gather they, expectant-gay,
Who throng around the Christmas-tree?
Leaves picked by love-instructed art
From off the branches of the heart;
Fruits culled from every tree and vine
Where zephyrs float and sunbeams shine.
Whate'er can brighten to our gaze
The trembling dawn of childhood days;
Whate'er can feed more clear and high
The flame of youth's expectant eye;
Whate'er can make more richly good
The blood of man or womanhood,
Or bid old age look smiling round
At gems of earth-joy newly found;
Whate'er can say, "While strength endures.
My life has love and help for yours."
Rich glows the Christmas-tree,
The heart-protected Christmas-tree—
With tokens dear that bring more near
God's earth-lent love to you and me.

"THE SWEET, LOVE-PLANTED CHRISTMAS-TREE"

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

To the air, "Portuguese Hymn"

We thank Thee, O Father, for all that is bright—
The gleam of the day, and the stars of the night;
The flowers of our youth and the fruits of our prime,
And blessings e'er marching the pathway of time.

We Thank Thee, O Father, for all that is drear—
The sob of the tempest, the flow of the tear;
For never in blindness, and never in vain,
Thy mercy permitted a sorrow or pain.

We thank Thee, O Father, for song and for feast—
The harvest that glowed and the wealth that increased;
For never a blessing encompassed thy child
But Thou in Thy mercy looked downward and smiled.

We thank Thee, O Father of all, for the power
Of aiding each other in life's darkest hour—
The generous heart and the bountiful hand,
And all the soul-help that sad souls understand.

We thank Thee, O Father, for days yet to be,
For hopes that our future will call us to Thee;
That all our Eternity form, through Thy love,
One Thanksgiving Day in the mansions above.

"MENDING THE OLD FLAG"

In the silent gloom of a garret room,
With cobwebs round it creeping,
From day to day the old Flag lay—
A veteran worn and sleeping.
Dingily old, each wrinkled fold
By the dust of years was shaded;
Wounds of the storm were upon its form;
The crimson stripes were faded.

'Twas a mournful sight in the day-twilight,
This thing of humble seeming,
That once so proud o'er the cheering crowd
Had carried its colors gleaming:
Stained with mould were the braids of gold,
That had flashed at the sun-ray's kissing;
Of faded hue was its field of blue,
And some of the stars were missing.

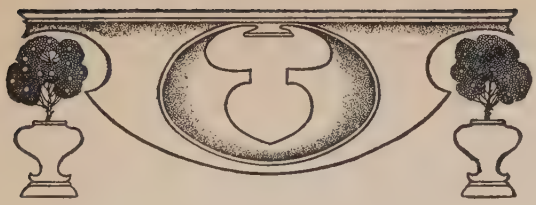
Three Northern maids and three from glades
Where dreams the Southland weather,

With glances kind and arms entwined,
  Came up the stair together:
They gazed awhile, with a thoughtful smile,
  At the crouching form before them;
With clinging holds they grasped its folds,
  And out of the darkness bore them.

They healed its scars, they found its stars,
  And brought them all together
(Three Northern maids and three fromglades
  Where smiles the Southland weather);
They mended away through the summer day,
  Made glad by an inspiration
To fling it high at the smiling sky,
  On the birthday of our nation.

In the brilliant glare of the summer air,
  With a brisk breeze round it creeping,
Newly bright through the glistening light,
  The flag went grandly sweeping:
Gleaming and bold were its braids of gold,
  And flashed in the sun-ray's kissing;
Red, white, and blue were of deepest hue,
  And none of the stars was missing.

"THEY MENDED AWAY THROUGH THE SUMMER DAY"



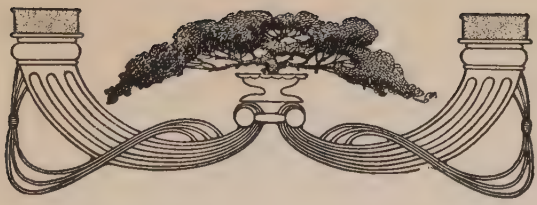
SONG—LANGUAGE OF THE FLAG

O stars of our flag one by one you arose,
'Till the sky on our banner was blazing with splendor!
Each ray from their depths is a night to our foes
And a sunburst of joy to the gallant defender.
Not only their worth cheers the land of your birth,
But flings its clear light to the ends of the earth!
And the nation shall never from victory rest
'Till the world is as free as the Land of the West!

O stripes of the flag!—you are emblems of woe
That fell on the hearts of the founders we cherish;
'Gainst the frowns of the storm and the guns of the foe
They fought that the land of their love should not perish.
The stripes that gleam red are from blood that was shed,
And the white ones between are from shrouds of our dead;

And farther and farther this emblem shall wave,
'Till the world has forgot that there e'er was a slave!

O staff of our flag:—you are sturdy and strong,
Like the people whose hands and whose hearts must uphold you!
You cling to the colors, through tempests of wrong,
Or when 'mid the zephyrs of peace they enfold you.
On many a field you have scorned e'er to yield,
For the hearts of the brave were your sword and your shield;
And you promise for ages to stay in your might,
'Till the world gathers round you—firm standard of right!



OUR GUESTS UNSEEN

Who are the guests in this festal throng?
  Many are here that we love and see:
Men who have heard the soprano song
  Of flying bullets that death set free;
Men who left a part of their days
  Off in the field where the blood-stains are;
Men who had dropped the sweet home-ways
  Out of their hands, to grasp a star.
Honor to those who are living yet!
  Time shall their laurels make more green!
But at this hour we must not forget
  Those we may call our guests unseen.

One is a silent, mighty soul,
  Who rose from the plane of common things,
To half of the fighting world's control,
  And starred in the list of Triumph's kings.
When humbly toiling for daily bread,
When soothed by Luxury's rich caress,
When measuring acres of hapless dead,
  Or flushed with the giddy draught, success;

Striving in blood-red clouds of woe
To lead the land 'neath victory's sun,
Or taking the sword of a fallen foe,
And writing the great words, "War is done";
Or ruling the marble halls of state,
Thrust far to the statesman's utmost goal,
Or ruined by those he found too late
Were friends of his purse and not his soul;
Or toiling on Mount McGregor's height,
Longing for days that would let him die,
Waging meanwhile a sturdy fight
Whenever the foe Despair came nigh;
From earliest life to latest breath,
Through valleys of woe, or hills of pride,
Through glories of life and glooms of death,
His heart and his brain marched side by side.
The Hudson's shore has the death-stilled heart;
The hands in that hermit-tomb may rest;
But heroes and graves dwell far apart,
And Grant to-day is our unseen guest!

Another: a lithe, commanding form,
Kind features, stern with a soldier-gaze:
A cliff of rock in a battle storm,
A garden of smiles in peaceful days.
He burned belligerent cities low,
He planted ruin on every side,
But offered love to a fallen foe,
And wept when his friend McPherson died.

"WE MUST NOT FORGET"

He shaped his army into a sword,
And cut the enemy's land in twain,
Yet gave the conquered their kindest word,
And erred, if ever, to spare them pain.
The office-heroes who fought for place,
Strove hard to fetter him with their pelf;
But he fought for his country and his race,
And not for jewels to crown himself.
In times of peace it was his to be
The foremost gentleman of the land:
Death has no power o'er such as he,
So reach for the brave old Sherman's hand!

Another: a tall and sinewy form,
A face marked deep with the lines of care;
A will of iron, but a heart as warm
As fiery breeze of the tropic air.
He was born a prince, but in hovels cast—
He made the cabin a palace, then;
He grew to be more than a king, at last;
For monarchs, you know, are not always men.
His fight for the crown was hard and grim,
But his march to the front was firm and true;
He fought for the stars, and the stars for him,
And God had miracles he must do.
At last he came to his lofty place,
But wild rebellion was knocking there;
Hot anger frowned at his honest face,
And desolation was in the air.

He swore that treason should be met
By every pain that could lay it low,
He rallied ruin against it; yet
His heart beat warm for every foe.
So on he toiled, till lo! in view
Swept sacred Emancipation's plan!
He did the deed he was sent to do;
For God was there and God knew His man.
Guiding the nation in rocks and shoals,
He climbed the eternal mast of fame,
And, graced with the thanks of all true souls,
Wrote Liberator before his name.
His eyes flashed triumph, then swift grew dim—
A murderer tore that life apart;
But those he loved are still loving him,
And Lincoln is here in every heart!

But why should I call the muster-roll
Of those who are here in our hearts to-day?
They need no naming; each true, grand soul
Has heard your summons and marched this way.
Why call to Hancock, worthy all praise,
Superb in stature and mental might,
Who helped save Gettysburg's ominous days,
And left brave blood at that glorious fight?
Why call to Sedgwick—modest man—
Who longed but to do his duty well;
Who died in the battle's deadly van,
With no obeisance to shot or shell?

Why call McClellan, whose last life view
Traced over these hills its eager track,
Whose soldiers called him their comrade true,
And spoke of him ever as "Little Mac"?
The Kearneys, Wadsworths, Burnsides, Meades,
Charge to the front of our memory; they
Endorse their commissions with noble deeds,
And star in this festal throng to-day.
A mighty and brilliant band is here,
That none with the eye of flesh may see;
They come from their graves both far and near,
Their bodies prisoned, their souls set free.
Year after year this unseen throng,
By death recruited, counts more and more;
And louder and louder the battle-song
Of heroes that camp on the unseen shore.
If they could speak to us all to-day,
These words with their greetings would be twined:
"Remember us with what love you may,
But care for our loved ones left behind.
You give us monuments grand and high,
You sing to our bravery o'er and o'er,
But let us know that we did not die
That those we cherished might suffer more!"

And where are the thousands who bravely waged
A losing strife? Whose hearts were true,
Though false their cause? Whose souls engaged
Their all in the work they had to do?

The warrior cruelest in the fight,
  Is tenderest to the fallen foe;
The hand that stabs with deadliest might,
  Would stanch forever the crimson flow.
If all of the noblest Southern dead
  Could march together into this place,
With Lee's tall form at the column's head,
  And Stonewall Jackson's calm, kind face,
And each should bear the smile of a friend,
  As many of those who live have done,
No man that is here, but would straight extend
  The hand of friendship to every one,
The war is over; the strife has fled;
  Love lingers the living ones between;
Let all of the brave Confederate dead
  Be welcomed here as our guests unseen!

"OF HEROES THAT CAMP ON THE UNSEEN SHORE"

OUR ARMY OF THE DEAD

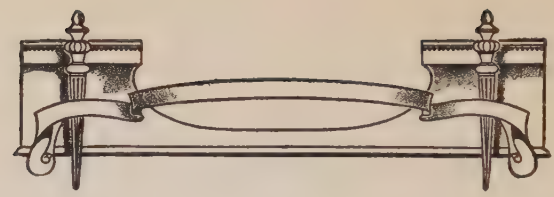
By the edge of the Atlantic, where the waves of Freedom roar,
And the breezes of the ocean chant a requiem to the shore,
On the nation's Eastern hill-tops, where its corner-stone is laid,
On the mountains of New England, where our fathers toiled and prayed,
Mid old Keystone's rugged riches, which the miner's hand await,
Mid the never-ceasing commerce of the busy Empire State,
With the country's love and honor on each brave, devoted head,
Is a band of noble heroes—is our Army of the Dead.

On the lake-encircled homestead of the thriving Wolverine,
On the beauteous Western prairies, with their carpeting of green,

By the sweeping Mississippi, long our country's
pride and boast,
On the rugged Rocky Mountains, and the rich
Pacific coast,
In the listless, sunny Southland, with its blossoms
and its vines,
On the bracing Northern hill-tops, and amid their
murmuring pines,
Over all our happy country—over all our nation
spread,
Is a band of noble heroes—is our Army of the
Dead.

Not with musket, and with sabre, and with glad
heart beating fast;
Not with cannon that had thundered till the bloody
war was past;
Not with voices that are shouting with the vim of
victory's note;
Not with armor gayly glistening, and with flags
that proudly float;
Not with air of martial vigor, nor with steady,
soldier tramp,
Come they grandly marching to us—for the boys
are all in camp.
With forgetfulness upon it—each within his earthly
bed,
Waiting for his marching orders—is our Army of
the Dead.

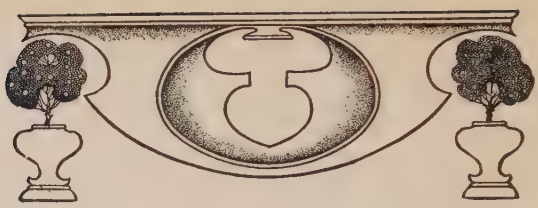
Fast asleep the boys are lying, in their low and narrow tents,
And no battle-cry can wake them, and no orders call them hence;
And the yearnings of the mother, and the anguish of the wife,
Cannot with their magic presence call the soldier back to life.



FESTIVALS OF THE NATION

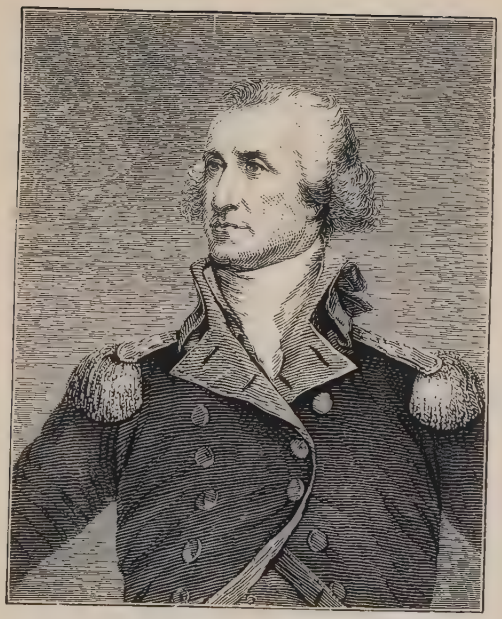
The January day when first Ben Franklin glanced upon
The Boston which acquired that day her most illustrious son;
The frigid February date when Washington first smiled
Upon the country that was yet to call itself his child;
The raw March day when Quakers made Concession's proclamation,
Thus furnishing a germ and hint for our own Declaration;
The weeping April day when, with a baby voice's aid,
Young Thomas Jefferson his first free utterance loudly made;
The sweet May day on which, amid the tear-drops' fragrant showers,
War-mourners covered first the graves of those they loved with flowers;

The famous seventeenth day of June when, with new-welded will,
Americans both lost and won the Battle of the Hill;
The sultry summer day when, set by passion's earthquake free,
A new-found nation showed its head above Oppression's sea
The August day when Fulton first, without a stitch of sail,
Climbed up the Hudson's liquid stair, in Acclamation's gale;
The blithe September day this land has no right to forget,
That made America the gift of valiant La Fayette;
The gold October day in which Columbus bent the knee,
And thanked his God for showing him a refuge for the free;
The bright November day, when, driven by patriot endeavor,
Armed Britons trimmed reluctant sails, and left New York forever:
The bright December day on which the Mayflower's frozen band
Stepped on the famous Pilgrim Rock, and thence to Freedom's land;
And several other days that come into our heart and mind,
On which the western world had served the cause of humankind.

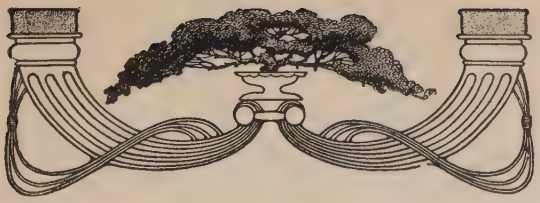


WASHINGTON-MONTH

February—February—
How your moods and actions vary,
Or to seek or shun!
Now a smile of sunlight lifting,
Now in chilly snowflakes drifting;
Now with icy shuttles creeping,
Silver webs are spun.
Now with laden torrents leaping,
Oceanward you run,
Now with bells you blithely sing,
'Neath the stars or sun;
Now a blade of murder bring
To the suff'ring one;
February—you are very
Dear, when all is done.
Many blessings rest above you—
You one day (and so we love you)
Gave us Washington.



GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON



RHYMES TO THE DAY

Oh, the Fourth of July!
When fire-crackers fly,
And urchins in petticoats tyrants defy:
When all the still air
Creeps away in despair,
And Clamor is king, be the day dark or fair
When Freedom's red flowers
Fall in star-spangled showers,
And Liberty capers for twenty-four hours!
When the morn's ushered in
By a sleep-crushing din,
That tempts us to use philological sin!
When the forenoon advances
With large circumstances
Subjecting our lives to debatable chances!
When the soldiers of peace
Their attractions increase,
By marching, protected with clubs of police!
When the little toy-gun
Has its share of the fun,
By teaching short-hand to the favorite son!

When maids do not scream
At the gun's noise and gleam,
Being chock-full of patriotism, gum, and ice-cream!
When horses, hard-bittish,
Get nervous and skittish,
Not knowing their ancestors helped whip the British!
When the family flag,
Full of stars, stripes, and brag,
From the window pops out like a cat from a bag!
When picnic crowds go forth,
Their freedom to throw forth,
Coming back full of patriotism, glory, and so forth!
When long-trained excursions,
With various diversions,
Go out and make work for the doctors and surgeons!
When Uncle Jim Brown
Drives his wagon to town,
Full of gingerbread, children, and thirst—for renown!
When good dear sister Jones
Hears the tumult with groans,
And prays that her children come off with whole bones!
When all fancies and joys
That can compass a noise,
The country in one day of glory employs!
'Tis a glorious time
For a song or a rhyme,
Or a grand cannonade, or an orchestra's chime,
If one can live through it,
And not come to rue it—
The day that our forefathers said they would do it!

Oh, the Fourth of July!
When grand souls hover nigh,
When Washington bends from the honest blue sky!
When Jefferson stands—
Famous scribe of all lands—
The charter of Heaven in his glorified hands!
When his comrade—strong, high
John Adams, comes nigh—
For both went to rest the same Fourth of July!
When Franklin—grand—droll—
That could lightnings control—
Comes here with his sturdy, progressive old soul!
When Freedom's strong staff,
Hancock—with a laugh—
Writes in Memory's Album his huge autograph!
When old Putnam is met:
Who—they'll never forget—
Showed the foe that a God was in Israel yet!
When Mad Anthony Wayne
Rides up with loose rein,
And receives our encomiums for being insane!
When George the Third flounced
From this country, well trounced,
Wishes now that his madness had been less pronounced!
When comes Hamilton, fain
To neglect to explain
How so little a form could support such a brain!
When the brave Lafayette,
Our preserver and pet,
Comes again to collect of us Gratitude's debt!

When Marion advances,
(His Christian-name Francis)
Who played for the British in several dances!
When all the souls grand
That made mighty our land,
Around us in hopefulness silently stand,
And wish, beyond doubt,
That they also could shout,
And help ring the anthem of Liberty out!
When the peals of our mirth,
And our claims of true worth,
Are heard to the uttermost ends of the earth;
To the low and the high,
Who the tyrants defy,
A glorious old day is the Fourth of July!

But let thought have its way,
And give memory sway:
Do we think of the cost of this glorified day?
Do we think of the pain
Of the body, heart, brain—
The toils of the living, the blood of the slain?
Should we ever forget
What a deep-mortgaged debt
Has been placed on this date, and exists even yet?
What to our minds saith
The icy cold breath
Of Valley Forge—freezing our soldiers to death?

Can our hearts find a tongue
For those men, old and young,
Who fought while a rope o'er their heads grimly hung?
Of the toils o'er and o'er
That brave Unionists bore,
Lest our country should go into pieces once more?
Do we think, while overt
Patriotism we assert,
How a sword-blade will sting—how a bullet can hurt?
Do we feel the fierce strain
Of the edge-belinked chain
That drags through the body—a wounded man's pain?
Do we know, by-the-way,
What it might be to stay
In the wards of a hospital, day after day,
While our life-blood was shed
On a pain-mattressed bed,
And no one we loved to stand near us when dead?
What it may be to lie
'Neath a smoke-blotted sky,
With horse-hoofs to trample us e'en as we die?
Do we think of that boy,
Full of hope, love, and joy,
Who died lest strong men should his country destroy!
Of that husband who fell
In the blood-streaming dell,
Leaving only the memory of battles fought well?

While the harvest-field waves,
Do we think of those braves
In the farms quickly planted with thousands of graves?
How the great flag up there,
Clean and pure as the air,
Has been drabbled with blood-drops, and trailed in despair?
Do we know what a land
God hath placed in our hand,
To be made into star-gems, or crushed into sand?
Let us feel that our race,
Doomed to no second place,
Must glitter with triumph or die in disgrace;
That millions unborn,
At night, noon, and morn,
Will thank us with blessings or curse us with scorn,
For raising more high
Freedom's flag to the sky,
Or losing forever the Fourth of July!

PART III

HUMOROUS VERSE

THE TWO BOYS

The "Tot" Discourses

Of all the peoples in this town,
  So far as I can see,
The best two fellows, up and down,
  Is Uncle Joe an' me.
We found each other long ago—
How much it is I can't quite know—
I guess a thousan' years or so—
  An' never didn't agree.

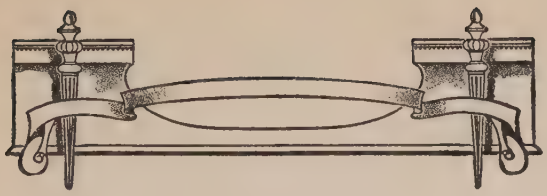
We know where all the bluejays nest,
  Does Uncle Joe an' me,
An' when the robins sings the best,
  An' where the squirrels be;
An' when the rabbits romp an' play,
An' where the biggest woodchucks stay,
An' where the owl sleeps every day,
  An' where the thrushes be.

When we drive out he lets me drive,
  An' then we both agree

There ain't two bigger sports alive
  Than Uncle Joe an' me.
He says he'd just as lives as not
Lend me the fastest horse he's got;
He wouldn't let no other "tot"
  Take hold the reins, you see!

We know the biggest stories, too,
  Does Uncle Joe an' me,
An' some of 'em is partly true,
  An' some is goin' to be;
'Bout Injuns, full of scalps an' noise,
An' giants that had trees fur toys,
An' how things was when we was boys—
  Some years ago, you see!

My mommer says we've got to die,
  An' angels live an' be,
An' go an' dwell up in the sky,
  From sin forever free;
But that's what I don't mean to do
Till Uncle Joe gets started, too:
For heaven would be most awful blue
  'Thout Uncle Joe an' me!



THE OARSMAN'S STORY

Hold it steady—don't disturb him—give him lee-
way for to bite.
Yes, you've got him! reel him careful, for he'll
make a lovely fight!
Oh, my gracious! now you've lost him, an' he's
swiped your hook an' bait!
Never mind; we'll throw another; he will stan'
around an' wait.
It's a reason for our thinkin' that the fish are slow
to feel,
That their appetites 'll sharpen when they get a
taste o' steel!

Now, that sort o' half reminds me of a bass I used
to know,
That was brains from prow to rudder, if a fish was
ever so;
For he stole my bait off handy every time I throwed
it in,
An' then flopped up from the water with a cunnin'
sort o' grin;

An' I fin'lly named him Lawyer: for he'd leave the hook as bare
As a client in a court-room with atturneys fur to spare.

An' I worked him late an' early, an' I give him all the chance
That a fish was ever offered, for to take a river-dance;
But he made the same division an' he drawed it very fine,
Taking fur himself the minny—leavin' me the hook an' line;
An' I struggled late and early with my fish-poles an' my reels,
An' my time an' strength an' minnies—jest to give that fish his meals.

An' it fin'lly come to askin' whether natives on the shore,
That had paddled through the river for a forty year or more,
Should be beaten every summer by a feller, it appears,
Who had only swum the water for a half a dozen years;
An' two nights I laid a-thinkin' how to work it on him slick,
An' to play the little lawyer one good everlastin' trick.

Then I built a queer contraption strung with new-invented crooks—
'Twas a circus made of minnies an' a side-show full o' hooks;
An' I don't suppose a critter could go near it head or tail,
But 'twas sure to catch him somehow, an' to hold him like a nail;
An' I loudly hollered "Glory!" an' was full o' joy an' pride,
When that afternoon I snapped him, with a fish-hook in his side!

But he mildly gazed upon me, as I drawed him up an' near,
With a look of disappointment in his eye so black an' clear;
An' he seemed to say as reg'lar as a fish with words to spare,
"Now, you know, to make it decent you are bound to catch me fair!
You an' I has been a-strivin' at a scientific game,
An' to treat me foul an' sneaky is an everlastin' shame!"

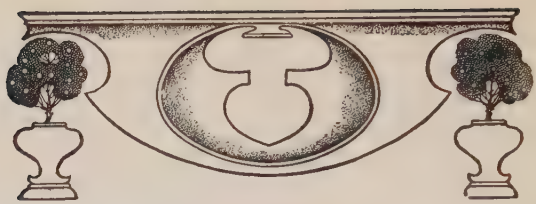
Then I ans'rs, "Do you mean it—do you think it—straight an' true?"
An' he winked his eye like sayin', "Yes, by gracious, sir, I do!"

An' I picked the fish-hook from him, usin' most unusual care,
An' he seemed to whisper, "Thank you; but it's only just an' fair!"
An' I cut off my new fish-hooks—all the whole infernal set—
An' I throwed 'em in the river, and they're in the river yet.

An' I launched my friend a-floatin' in the water cold an' blue,
An' he flopped a sort of "Thank you" as he disappeared from view;
An' he never stole a minny nor seemed ready to commence,
Though he's sort o' hung around me in the water ever sence;
An' I often think the feller means to pay me back ag'in,
An' now acts as my atturney fur to rope the others in.

But he started me a-thinkin': When you fish, as fish you will,
Be a sport an' not a butcher; try to catch an' not to kill;
Keep enough to serve your eatin', let the surplus fellers go;
Send the small ones to their mothers—give 'em time to fat an' grow;

An' when pullin' in the fishes, don't be slow to recollect
To secure 'em in a manner not to forfeit their respect.



FROM CORNFIELD TO RIVER

Yes, a seashore swimmin'-hole in a manner is excitin',
Jumpin' billows like a hoop, or with ramlike waves a-fightin';
Beddin' in the flea-bit sand, tryin' to improve the weather,
In a pair of overalls an' a shirt-waist sewed together;
But for me, I must agree, that the ocean ain't a trimmin'
To the day we ran away from the fields, to go a-swimmin'!
[Thus said Ahab Adams, riding in "my auto-mo-what-is-it?"
To his brother Daniel Adams, from Montana on a visit.]

What an afternoon that was! All creation seemed a-burnin'!
Sim an' Jim an' me an' you agricult'ral tricks was learnin';

'Mongst the corn an' punkin vines for the world's advancement growin',
We four boys was takin' walks where the baked world needed hoein'.

What a hot-house day it was! Sun a bonfire just above us;
Air as still as grassy graves of the folks that used to love us;
Skies as clear as babies' eyes—old moon grinned at our condition;
Cloud or cloudlet anywhere was an unknown proposition.
So we done the horses' work, while they stood 'neath shade-trees charmin'
(Cultivators wan't yet made, so that men could ride their farmin').

An' we walked an' hoed an' arg'ed various matters of creation
That would make us think way off an' forget our perspiration:
Wondered 'bout the steamboat craft ploughin' up a watery furrow,
Deacon Smith had seen one day when he went to Middleborough;
Wondered at the railroad trains—how there ever come to be one—
If they'd sometime skip our way, so we'd ever git to see one;

Talked about the stars on high—mostly suns of long existence—
Glad, if they was like *our* sun, they knowed how to keep their distance;
Talked about the 'lectric wire that the city folks was gettin'—
Wondered how they kep' the news, when 'twas rainy, from a wettin';

Talked about the winter school; how we worked there like the dickens
On the sums; an' how, somehow, ans'ers wan't as flush as lickin's;
How warm Sundays growed the sermons; how we never got to miss one;
Wondered if the other world had a cornfield hot as this one;
Talked our high ambitions higher, mourned the poverty that bound us—
Talked of all the pretty gals for ten miles or so around us;
Hoein' with our minds an' hearts facts we'd noticed or been taught of—
Several things that Markham's fool mebby never even thought of.

But while we was bakin' there, raisin' fodder for the cattle,
In the road some rods away we could hear a wagon rattle;

It was Dad, a-drivin' off to'rds the village, with the
women;
An' I recollect you said, "Boys, le's sneak an' go
a-swimmin'!"

I hev since been up an' down through agreements
an' contentions;
I hev even helped to run legislatur's an' conventions;
But for unanimity right up equal to my notion
I hev never seen it yet since the time you made
that motion.

How we crept off through the woods till we found
that blessed river!
How we dove into its depths, with a first delicious
shiver!
How we paddled up an' down! How we splashed
each others' faces!
How we tunnelled through the water, comin' up in
different places!
How we towed each other round by the hair an'
heels alternit!
How a half of us could swim an' the others tried to
learn it!
How we envied everything that was ever scaled or
finny!
"This," I recollect you said, "beats the cornfield
all to Guinea!"

Yes, 'twas heaven! an' when 'twas through nothin' made it less elatin'
'Ceptin Dad upon the bank, with some birch-sticks, calmly waitin'.

ALWAYS A "KICK"

"Farmer, how was your wheat this year?"—
"Thrifty of stalk and head;
Plump of kernel and cleanly grown—
Better than any I ever have known,"
The smiling farmer said.

"How was your crop of corn this year,
Marketed, floured, or fed?"—
"Sleek and thick, and yellow as gold,
And never a frost till the season was old,"
The smiling farmer said.

"How are your oats and barley and rye,
Your apples of green and red?
How did the hay and potatoes thrive?"—
"Never better since man was alive,"
The candid farmer said.

"Farmer, what was the guerdon you gained
For crops that you marketed?"—
"Prices stood at the very top,
And beckoned and beckoned for every crop,"
The smiling farmer said.

"Then you have nothing to grumble about,
But praise and rejoice instead!"—
"Well, but then you must understand
Such crops draw terribly on the land!"
The grumbling farmer said.

FARMER STEBBINS AT FOOTBALL

While walkin' up the village street, a-fightin' there
I see
Some twenty fellers, more or less, as fierce as fierce
could be.
'Twas in a medder nigh to where the college late
was built,
An' not a proper place for blood to be unduly
spilt;
So, very peaceable inclined, an' al'ays actin' thus,
I thought, "I'll try what may be done to regulate
the fuss."

My goodness, how them fellers fit! they'd punch
each other there
Like hungry cattle when the frost is nibblin'
through the air.
An' one would pick up somethin' quick, an' run
off, fit to kill,
With several others chasin' him, as chickens some-
times will;

Then if he on his stomach fell, there right in his distress
They'd pounce upon him, hard an' square, a dozen, more or less;

An' when my eyes untangled 'em, an' glanced 'em through an' o'er,
To my surprise I found I'd seen full half of 'em before:
Young Caleb Stubbs, who once was raised across the road from me,
But I had never thought, before, would hurt an ailin' flea;
An' Joseph Minks, who's al'ays fit whene'er he had a chance,
Was now as gay an' much to home as Frenchmen at a dance;

An' Thomas Tutts, who's bein' taught so he himself can teach;
An' Samuel Strapp, who's trainin' so's to have a call to preach;
An' Peter Pills, who'll some day strive to cure the world, no doubt,
Was strivin' hard, apparently, to kill an' wipe 'em out;
An' several others all appeared to do what death they could,
From whom I'd al'ays looked for things a thousan' times as good.

An' what still deeper troubled me, a lot o' folks
near by
Didn't seem to care to hold 'em back, an' wouldn't
even try;
But sort o' toiled to help it on, an' make a fightin'
din;
An' even girls would grit their teeth an' holler,
"Boys, go in!"
An' then I says, "Them fellers all appear in Death's
employ;
If there's an undertaker here, he's sheddin' tears
of joy."

An' terrified at what they'd done, an' what they
meant to do,
I struggled hard to recollect a Riot Act or two;
But naught appeared that I could reach on Mem-
ory's cluttered shelf,
An' so I had, as one might say, to make one up
myself.
I wildly rushed into their midst, an' yelled with all
my might,
"See here, now, boys, this school wasn't built to
teach you how to fight!"

But still they all kep' on their way, as fierce as
fierce could be,
An' none of 'em was blessed with sense to listen
unto me;

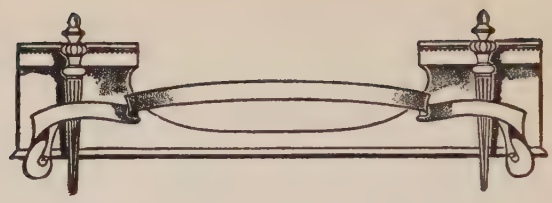
But while I still upheld the right, in words I won't
repeat,
Th' apparent cause of all their fuss rolled plump
betwixt my feet!
An' then such buffetin' amidst the angry waves of
strife,
I never yet had come across in all my earthly life!

I've sported in a skatin'-rink, an' helped to dust
the floor;
I've served as drift-wood in the waves of Jersey's
stormy shore;
I've clutched a tall toboggan-slide, the while my
cheek did blanch,
Then, lettin' go, reluctantly become an avalanche;
I've entered cars on Brooklyn Bridge 'twixt five
an' six o'clock;
But these was only zephyr breaths beside an earth-
quake shock.

They jumbled me, they tumbled me, some several
fellers deep,
Until I gave up every sense an' feebly fell asleep;
An' when I woke, and mildly asked if all my bones
was there,
No one contigious seemed to know, or specially to care;
But several fellers, with their face all black an'
blue an' red,
Jumped up an' down, a-wavin' han's, and shoutin',
"We're ahead!"

"Now, who's ahead?" says I, when I a listenin' ear could find;
"Whoever 'tis, here's one old fool that's several rods behind!
Why are you studyin' carnage here?—what is this all about?"
An' then they hollered, "Football, Dad! — we've gone an' cleaned 'em out!"
Whereat I says, "If this is what you call a friendly game,
Heaven shield me from your courtesies, an' help me dodge the same."

Then everybody laughed an' joked, rejoicin' in such crimes,
An' said, "Old man, the trouble is, you're 'way behind the times."
An' then I said, "All right. I'll keep behind 'em, if you please—
'Hind anything, to shield me from such goin's on as these;
An' when I'm anxious suddenly from this world to escape,
I'll go an' dance on dynamite, an' do it up in shape."



FARMER STEBBINS AWHEEL

I went to Brooklyn visitin' to see what I could see,
An' twenty thousan' bicycles come rushin' after me;
I couldn't even cross the road, or stop to look around,
But some one's wheel was sure to want that very inch of ground;
An' those at whom I shook my fist at scarin' of me thus
Would call me names an' skitter off 'fore I could clinch the fuss.

An' some of them was double-bent, with noses near the ground,
As if their pocket-books was lost, an' hadn't yet been found;
An' some was steamin' 'long the road, in reg'lar engine-shape,
As if they'd stole a dollar bill an' wanted to escape;

An' some was wildly chewin' gum, industrious as could be,
As if they'd lately took a job to gnaw a hemlock-tree;

An' some had faces of despair, as if on frenzy's brink,
An' some was men an' some was boys, an' some was girls—I think;
An' some was ladies, lady-dressed an' lookin' fine an' neat
As that same number of bouquets a-glidin' down the street;
An' when a man about my size come ridin' with a dame,
I says, "If he can pump a wheel, then I can do the same."

A little boy with turn-up nose an' unregenerate eye
Had overheard my loud remarks, an' told the followin' lie:
He says to me, "The cycles all have big improvements now,
An' any one can ride 'em though he hasn't first learned how";
An' so I hired a stout machine from some one in a store,
An' mounted on, an' started off the village to explore.

The snub-nose boy he helped me up with all the
strength he had,
Then give a push, an' hollered out, "A pleasant
journey, Dad!"
An' so it was, a rod or two; when, like some livin'
dunce,
The lean an' slippery critter tried to go two ways
at once;
An', like a polertician-chap, I strove to do the
same,
An' felt the ground reverberate beneath my mas-
sive frame.

I looked around to find the boy; he wasn't no-
where seen,
An' I raised up the bicycle, a-feelin' rather green;
An' then I said, "There's some mistake; I'll try
the thing ag'in,
An' it will probably behave, when I have broke it
in."
An' so I leaped upon its back, an' started off once
more,
An' promptly felt the earth ag'in, through all the
clothes I wore.

An' then I sort o' twisted 'round an' rose into a
rage,
An' started wildly in once more the critter to
engage;

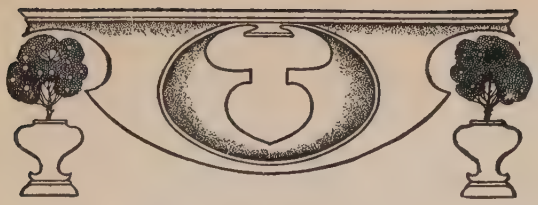
An' hollered loud, so all the folks come runnin'
'round to see,
"You little beast, you think you'll get the upper
han's of me?
Perhaps you think a farmer bold hain't pluck to
bring you down,
That's broke some thirty colts to bit, an' half the
mules in town!"

An' then I strove for victory, with all my varied
powers,
For ten good minutes by the clock, but seemin'ly
for hours;
An' every time I made a move my mastery to
display
The little wretch would twist itself in some new-
fashioned way;
An' sometimes it would lie an' rest, as placid as
could be,
Then I'd be on my back, an' it a-grinnin' down at
me;

An' then 'twould rear up like a horse, an' weave
an' twist awhile,
An' I would stan' upon my head, in reg'lar circus
style;
An' then 'twould kind o' paw the earth, an' wave
its hinder wheel,
An' I would turn a somerset and give a frenzied
squeal;

Until at last I laid amongst a million laughin' folks,
My head upon a pavin'-stone, my legs between some spokes,

An' shouted, as I give my neck a slow an' painful turn,
"Bring me that snub-nose boy that said we didn't have to learn!
Give me the man that first among a trustin' people came
An' set at large this dang'rous beast with 'Safety' for its name!
I'll whip 'em with each other in as good a shape, you'll see,
As this 'ere bunch of metal bones has threshed the earth with me!"



FARMER STEBBINS ON ROLLERS

ROCHESTER, *January 4.*

DEAR COUSIN JOHN:

WE got here safe—my worthy wife an' me—
An' put up at James Sunnyhopes'—a pleasant place to be;
An' Isabel, his oldest girl, is home from school just now,
An' pets me with her manners all her young man will allow;
An' his good wife has monstrous sweet an' culinary ways:
It is a summery place to pass a few cold winter days.

Besides, I've various cast-iron friends in different parts o' town,
That's always glad to have me call whenever I come down;
But t'other day, when 'mongst the same I undertook to roam,
I could not find a single one that seemed to be to home!

An' when I asked their whereabouts, the answer was, "I think,
If you're a-goin' down that way, you'll find 'em at the Rink."

I asked what night the Lyceum folks would hold their next debate—
(I've sometimes gone an' helped 'em wield the scythe of Church an' State),
An' if protracted meetin's now was holdin' anywhere
(I like to get my soul fed up with fresh celestial fare);
Or when the next church social was; they'd give a knowin' wink,
An' say, "I b'lieve there's nothin' now transpirin' but the Rink."

"What is this 'Rink'?" I innocent inquired, that night at tea.
"Oh, you must go," said Isabel, "this very night with me!
And Mrs. Stebbins she must go, an' skate there with us, too!"
My wife replied, "My dear, just please inform me when I do.
But you two go." An' so we went, and saw a circus there,
With which few sights I've ever struck will anyways compare.

It seems a good-sized meetin'-house had given up
its pews
(The church an' pastor had resigned, from spiritual
blues),
An' several acres of the floor was made a skatin'
ground,
Where folks of every shape an' size went skippin'
round an' round;
An' in the midst a big brass band was helpin' on
the fun,
An' everything was gay as sixteen weddin's joined
in one.

I've seen small insects crazy-like go circlin' through
the air,
An' wondered if they thought some time they'd
maybe get somewhere;
I've seen a million river-bugs go scootin' round an'
round,
An' wondered what 'twas all about, or what they'd
lost or found;
But men an' women, boys an' girls, upon a hard-
wood floor,
All whirlin' round like folks possessed, I never saw
before.

An' then it straight came back to me, the things
I'd read an' heard
About the rinks, and how their ways was wicked
an' absurd;

I'd learned somewhere that skatin' wasn't a healthy
thing to do—
But there was Dr. Saddlebags—his fam'ly with him,
too!
I'd heard that 'twasn't a proper place for Christian
folks to seek:—
Old Deacon Perseverance Jinks flew past me like a
streak!

Then Sister Is'bel Sunnyhopes put on a pair o'
skates,
An' started off as if she'd run through all th' ad-
joining States.
My goodness! how that gal showed off! I never
did opine
That she could twist herself to look so charmin' an'
so fine!
And then a fellow that she knew took hold o' hands
with her,
A sort o' double crossways like, an' helped her, as
it were.

I used to skate; an' 'twas a sport of which I once
was fond:
Why, I could write my autograph on Tompkins'
saw-mill pond!
Of course to slip on runners, that is one thing, one
may say,
An' movin' round on casters is a somewhat different
way;

"WHEN ALL TO ONCE THE WHEELS"

But when the fun that fellow had came flashin' to my eye,
I says, "I'm young again; by George, I'll skate once more or die!"

A little boy a pair o' skates to fit my boots soon found—
He had to put 'em on for me (I weigh three hundred pound);
An' then I straightened up an' says, "Look here, you younger chaps,
You think you're runnin' some'at past us older heads, perhaps:
If this young lady here to me will trust awhile her fate,
I'll go around a dozen times an' show you how to skate."

She was a niceish, plump young gal, I'd noticed quite awhile,
An' she reached out her hands with 'most too daughterly a smile;
But off we pushed with might an' main; when all to once the wheels
Departed sudden for the roof, an' took along my heels;
My head attacked the floor as if 'twas tryin' to get through,
An' all the stars I ever saw arrived at once in view.

'Twas sing'lar (as not quite unlike a saw-log there I lay)
How many of the other folks was goin' that same way;
They stumbled over me in one large animated heap,
An' formed a pile o' legs an' arms not far from ten foot deep;
But after they had all climbed off, in rather fierce surprise,
I lay there like a saw-log still—considerin' how to rise.

Then, dignified I rose, with hands upon my ample waist,
An' then sat down again with large and very painful haste;
An' rose again; and started off to find a place to rest;
Then skated on my stomach some, an' tore my meetin' vest;
When Sister Sunnyhopes slid up as trim as trim could be,
An' she an' her young fellow took compassionate charge o' me,

Then after I'd got off the skates an' flung 'em out o' reach,
I rose, while all grew hushed an' still, an' made the followin' speech:

"My friends, I've struck a small idea (an' struck
it pretty square),
Which physic'ly an' morally will some attention
bear:
Those who their balance can preserve are safe here
any day,
An' those who can't, I rather think, had better
keep away."

Then I limped out with very large unprecedented
pains,
An' hired a horse at liberal rates to draw home my
remains;
An' lay abed three days, while wife laughed at an'
nursed me well,
An' used up all the arnica four drug-stores had to
sell;
An' when Miss Is'bel Sunnyhopes said, "Won't
you skate once more?"
I answered, "Not while I remain on this terrestrial
shore."

FARMER STEBBINS AT OCEAN GROVE

Ocean Grove, *June 30, 18—*

Dear Cousin John:

We got here safe—my worthy wife and me—
And hired a tent here in the woods contiguous to the sea;
We've harvested such means of grace as growed within our reach—
We've been to several meetings here, and heard the Bishop preach;
And everything went easy like until we took a whim—
My wife and I—one breezy day, to take an ocean swim.

We shouldn't have ventured on't, I think, if Sister Sunnyhopes
Hadn't urged us over and again, and said she knew "the ropes,"
And told how soothing it would be "in ocean rills to lave,"
And "sport within the bounding surf," and "ride the crested wave";

And so we went along with her—my timid wife and me—
Two inland noodles, for our first acquaintance with the sea.

They put me in a work-day rig, as usually is done—
A wampus and short overalls all sewed up into one.
I had to pull and tug and shrink to make the thing go 'round
(You are aware my peaceful weight will crowd three hundred pound).
They took my wig and laid it up—to keep it dry, they said—
And strapped a straw-stack of a hat on my devoted head.

You know my wife is long and slim—somewhat my opposite—
And clothes that was not made for her is likely not to fit;
But as we was we vent'red in—my timid wife and me—
And formed our first acquaintance with the inconsistent sea.

Miss Sunnyhopes she waded out a-looking nice and sweet
(She'd had her dress made to the store, and trimmed from head to feet);

And I went next, and grabbed their rope just as
she told me to,
And wife came third, a-looking scared, scarce
knowing what to do.
Then Sister Sunnyhopes a smile of virgin sweetness
gave,
And said, "Now watch your chance, and jump—
here comes a *lovely* wave!"

I must have jumped, I rather think, the wrong
time of the moon;
At any rate the "lovely wave" occurred to me too
soon!
It took me sudden, with a rude and unexpected
shock;
I'd rather meet the stoutest pair of horns in all
my flock!
And then to top the circus out, and make the
scene more fine,
I tried to *kick* this "lovely wave," and let right go
the line.

On county fairs and 'lection-days, in walking
through a crowd,
I'm rather firm to jostle 'gainst—perhaps it makes
me proud;
But if it does, that wave just preached how *sure-
ness* never pays,
And seemed to say, "How small is man, no odds
how much he weighs!"

It kicked and cuffed me all about, as if I'd been a straw;
With all the qualities they give an average mother-in-law!

And then it fired me on the bank, quite thankful for my life,
And looking 'round I give a gaze to find my faithful wife;
But she had kind o' cut this wave with all the edge she had,
And stood a-lookin' 'round for me, uncommon moist and sad;
While Sister Sunnyhopes with smiles was looking sweet and gay,
A-floating on her dainty back some several rods away!

Then all at once a brindle wave, uncommon broad and deep,
Came thrashing down on wife and me, and flopped us in a heap!
Heels over head—all in a bunch—my wife across of me,
And I on some unlucky folks who happened there to be;
My hat untied and floated off, and left my bald head bare—
When I got out, if I'd have spoke, 'twould warmed up all the air!

We drank 'bout two-thirds of the sea—my gasping
wife and I—
While Sister S. still floated soft, a-gazing at the
sky!

We voted that we'd had enough, and got right out
the way
Before another wave arrived, and bid the sea good-
day.
We looked as like two drowned rats as ever such
was called,
With one of them a dumbed old fool and most com-
pletely bald.
But, like a woman true she says—my shivering
wife to me—
"We will not mind; there's others here looks just
as bad as we."

Now, Sister Sunnyhopes, by'm-by, came back into
our tent,
As sleek or sleeker than before, and asked us "Why
we went?"
Said I, "My dear good Sister S., please do not now
pretend
You did not see our voyage through, and mark its
doleful end.
If you would do the mermaid act, why such I'd
have you be;
But we're too old to take that part—my faithful
wife and me;

"Some folks may be who ocean waves are fitted
to command,
But we've concluded *we* was built expressly for
the land.
And when I want amusement for an uncompleted
day,
I guess I'll go and take it in some good old-fashioned
way;
And will not stand upon my head 'fore all the
folks that's there,
And wildly wave my dumbed old feet in all the
neighboring air!"

FARMER STEBBINS AT THE BAT

BROOKLYN *July 5.*

DEAR BROTHER JOHN:

WE got here safe, my good old wife an' me,
An' then I strolled out to the Park, to see what I could see.
Some fellows there was playin' ball—an' with a waggish smile
One chap inquired of me if *I* wouldn't like to play awhile;
For I'd made some remarks about the way the game was run,
An' maybe I'd take hold, he said, an' show em how 'twas done.

I used to play, some years ago, when youth still lingered near,
Before three hundred pounds of meat impaired my runnin' gear;
An' so I said, "All right, I'm in; I'll give the ball a whack,
For I don't like to have old age invite me to stan' back";

An' then I spoke up to'm an' said, with quite a limber tongue,
"I'll show you how we used to play when your old dads was young."

"Of course you'll stan' up to the rules?" the waggish chap inquired;
"An' will you pitch or catch?" Says I, "I'll catch if so desired."
An' then they brought a muzzle out an' strapped it to my head,
To keep my mug from gettin' scraped by some one's bat, they said.
But I didn't mind; I says, "All right; just trim me up complete,
Providin' you don't tie no wires aroun' my hands nor feet."

But when I caught their pesky ball, I yelled out with a groan,
"Good sakes alive! I didn't suppose you played it with a stone!"
Then they all laughed, and says, "Of course this ain't no one-old-cat!"
An' laughed again when I remarked, "I'm sensible of that;
But when *we* used to play baseball we wouldn't have thought 'twas smart
To pelt each other with a chunk of old King Pharaoh's heart!"

Then they all laughed again, an' said I'd better take the field;
An' I remarked, "I'm used to that" (a fact quite unconcealed);
An' so I toddled off, an' stood, without a word to say,
Until "a hot ball," as they said, came boilin' down my way;
It landed somewhere on my frame, uncommon hard an' square,
An' I laid down, reached up my han's, an' wildly clasped it there.

An' then they laughed an' cheered an' said, I'd caught it on the fly.
"I caught it on my stomach, if I'm any judge," says I.
An' then they laughed an' cheered some more, an' said, "Our side is in,
An' it is our turn at the bat, an' your turn to begin."
An' then I grasped the ball-club tight, an' says unto them all,
"I'll show you how to treat a hard an' unregenerate ball!"

The fellow that propelled the thing wouldn't throw it square an' straight;
He'd give a sort of cow-like kick, an' pitch it like a quoit;

"PRODUCED AN UNFORSEEN RESULT"

So when I struck, with my whole firm of muscle,
brain, an' heart,
The fierce blow found the ball an' club some several
foot apart;
An' leanin' up, an' strikin' 'gainst the atmosphere
instead,
Produced an unforseen result, an' stood me on my
head.

"Strike one!" the fellow that they call the "em-
peror" loudly cried.
"It's full as much as that," I says, a-perchin' on
my side.
"Play ball!" he shouted. An' I says, "It ain't so
much like play
As some things I have seen; but then, no matter;
fire away!"
An' so he fired; whereat the ball benumbed each
finger's-end,
Then cuffed my sufferin' ears, like some enraged
maternal friend.

"Foul!" shouted loud the emperor, then, in accents
loud an' high.
"You're right again; it's foul indeed, an' painful
too," says I:
An' then I thought, "I'll wipe that ball half-way
out of existence,
Or lay right down here an' expire, with mourners
at a distance."

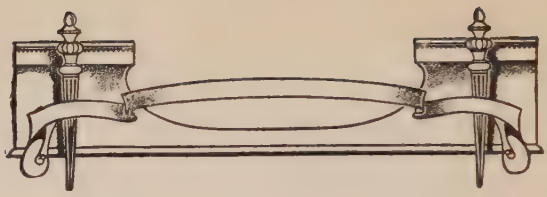
An' straightenin' back, I gave the thing a self-benumbin' blow,
An' sent it wobblin' through the air; an' then they shouted, "Go!"

Now I was kind of turned around 'bout where I might belong,
An' nimble as an elephant, I struck my bearin's wrong;
I stood the emperor on his head, I run the catcher down,
I barked my waggish friend's left shin, before he turned me roun';
An' then he yelled, "Pick up your heels!" an' fool-bewildered quite,
I stopped an' looked, an' said, "They're here! I've got em' on all right!"

An' then they laughed an' cheered some more, an' said, "Go! make your base!"
An' off I went, with quickened breath, an' heat-illumined face;
I gave no heed unto the world; but, thunderin' straight ahead,
Produced an earthquake in that Park by my resistless tread;
An' then I stubbed my off big toe, an' hadn't time to rise,
An' rolled three-quarters of the way, to my base, and surprise.

"Out on a fly!" the emperor says, a-brushin' off his sleeve.
"Out on a bender, I should think!" I says, prepared to leave;
"This game has too much earnestness to make it play for me;
It's full of hardship for to do, however nice to see.
The easiest way to play baseball, is just to sit an' tell
How things you never could have done could be done twice as well."

Then Sister Is'bel Sunnyhopes, to my intense surprise,
Drove up an' took me in, with tears an' laughter in her eyes:
"Miss Isabel," I humbly said, "it always seems to me,
The bigger fool I make myself, the more you're there to see.
I'll furnish you with candy all the rest your nat'ral life,
If you won't pick this picnic up, an' take it to my wife."



FARMER STEBBINS TOBOGGANS

ROCHESTER, *February 28.*

DEAR COUSIN JOHN:

I GOT here safe, uncommonly alone,
An' walked the streets in head-up style, quite willin' to be known;
With all the triumph in my eyes of one who works an' waits,
An' in my overcoat a pair of first-class roller-skates;
An', anxious out of glory's well a bucketful to drink,
I never stopped until I reached that same old skating-rink.

For ever since the fearful night* I wrote about before,
I've swathed up safe an' practised sly upon my granary floor;

* Referring to his troubles in the skating-rink, detailed on another page.

I tumbled till it sagged the joists, but persevered an beat,
An' skated like a critter born with casters on its feet;
An' now I says, "These swells will learn—what my best neighbors know—
That, when he all unwinds himself, Old Stebbins ain't so slow."

But when I reached that festive place, 'twas locked up, I declare,
An' everything was desolate-like, an' not a soul was there!
While on the door a brand-new sign said: "Stand up for the Right!
"Salvation Army holds this fort! Prayer-meeting every night!"
I asked where all the skaters was; a passin' boy replied,
"Rink's bu'st; they're all a-takin' in the new toboggan-slide!"

"Ah me!" I said; "the same old game! It's 'one go all go sheep!'"
Then started off to find the place as fast as I could creep;
For, though I criticise my race, I can't help but belong;
An' soon I found myself within the same old giddy throng.

But now they played at down an' up, instead of roun' and roun',
An' skated somewhat like I did the night that I fell down.

An' some was dressed in usual style—the same as any one—
An' some had nightcaps, red an' blue, an' small bed-blankets on;
An' some rode head-first on their chins, an' some sat stiff an' still,
An' 'twasn't unlike the good old times we used to ride down-hill.
(But all through life I've noticed, 'mongst girls, women, boys, an' men—
This climbin' up to some large height, to be pushed down again!)

As I thus mused, who should come up the easy, stair-cased slopes,
But my old, young, true, treacherous friend, Miss Is'bel Sunnyhopes!
Who's got me into more small scrapes than any girl on earth,
An' always helped me out again, with tender-seasoned mirth;
But everything looked safe like as she fluttered to my side,
And said, "My dear friend!—is it you?—do come and have a slide!"

She borrowed from a smart young man—a fellow
that she knew—
A han'-sled with the runners gone—just big enough
for two;
They'd rode in partnership, it seems; an' he gave
up his place,
With something that wasn't quite content upon
his lengthenin' face;
An' off we flew, with speed that shocked an' made
me almost blind,
Fast as that first tobogganer—the foeman of man-
kind.

We went straight down, an' clim' back safe; an'
no mishap had known,
If I had heard cold Reason say, "Let well enough
alone."
But Isabel's young fellow looked as sour as sour
could be,
An' just as if he'd like to make a mince-pie out of
me;
An' so I says, "I'll lengthen still this young man's
underlip,"
And turned to Isabel an' said, "Let's take another
trip."

The second ride I gave a glance at two small boards
that lay
On edge to keep us sliders in the straight an' nar-
row way;

My eyes was sort of misted like, I lost or lent my
head,
An' grabbed these boards, supposin' them a portion
of the sled;
I stopped off; an' the sleigh went on, an' left me,
in a trice,
A-hangin' there with nothin' much betwixt me an'
the ice.

"Hold on!" "Let go!" "Climb up!" "Slide down!"
I heard the people roar:
I didn't know which one not to do, an' so I tried
all four.
I kicked an' grabbed an' clim' an' clawed, an' felt
from foot to scalp
As if I was in Switzerland a-hangin' to an
Alp;
My skates hopped out an' skittered off like boys
let clear of school
(First time they'd ever run without an old bald-
headed fool)!

My hat an' specs' skipped clean away, as if they'd
caught the craze,
An' been a-longin' for this chance for several nights
and days;
Three apples an' five dough-nuts, an' a purchased
bakery bun,
All tried the new toboggan-slide, an' went down,
one by one;

"WITH SOBER FACE, BUT EYES UPON THE BROADEST KIND OF GRIN"

An' as for me—as some girls say, in that "brook" song they sing,
I "slipped an' slid an' gloomed an' glanced," an' grabbed at everything.

An' finally I twisted round, head-foremost on my back,
An' went down like a lightnin' train that's just run off the track,
An' reached the bottom of the hill within a little while,
Then rolled an' scooted somethin' like a quarter of a mile;
An' when I gathered up, unhurt, but awful unattired,
I felt some like the waddin' of a shot-gun lately fired.

Then Isabel came softly up, with Pity's soothin' charms,
An' all of my lost property scooped in her han'some arms,
An' re'lly hoped I wasn't hurt—and handed me a pin—
With sober face, but eyes upon the broadest kind of grin;
And then her fellow came, and made a show of helpin' me;
But that 'ere underlip of his was short as short could be

An' then I turned, an' said "Good-bye" to all the
people round;
"My friends, I'm out of place again; on more than
slippery ground!
This goin' back upon their age is what no one
should do;
It's hard to play the fine young man an' be an old
one too.
Farewell to rinks an' slides while days aroun' me
slip an' roll!
I'll spend the spare time after this on my immortal
soul."